

GCI partnered with the Ed Fund for a year-long mentorship and learning experience to strengthen the building and construction trades pathway at Fremont High School. The goal of the program was to prepare students for exciting and lucrative careers in the construction and trades industries.

Program Activities and Details

Between September and April of the 2023-24 school year, 30 students in the Architecture Academy career pathway at Fremont High School interested in the construction industry attended bi-weekly afterschool meetings with mentors from GCI. In addition to sharing their own career path, why they chose their career, and what helped them advance, mentors also helped students examine students' personal values and career ambitions. Students and mentors met on campus an hour at a time and alternated between meeting in a 1:5 mentor-to-student ratio or as a single, larger group.

In addition, students attended one capstone lecture a month as well as hands-on building activities, plus two site visits. In the fall, they visited the Laborers Training Center and in the spring, a real job site in San Francisco. Halfway through the program, over 90% of students found the mentorship program to be a good use of their time, with one student noting that they enjoyed "learning about construction but also learning to ask questions."

Program Impact



- As a result of this program, all 30 students received direct support from one or more GCI mentors, developed their skills and network in the construction industry, and finished the program with a completed resume and professional online profile on LinkedIn.
- Over 90% of surveyed students thought the mentorship program was worth their time and gave them a broader understanding of construction careers available to them.
- 100% of surveyed students said it helped guide their career development.
- 75% of surveyed volunteers felt the program helped their mentee develop their professional and career goals.



"This program was great! So glad I got to join this mentorship program as my last year in high school."

- ConstructionLink student

Learnings and Looking Ahead

This year was the first of its kind with GCI providing the opportunity to pilot a construction-focused career preparation mentorship program. Feedback from students was primarily positive, with many expressing a desire for more time with their mentors, including hands-on, off-campus learning.

“Thank you for choosing Fremont and mentoring us!”
- ConstructionLink Student

“The group discussion we had around networking and applying to jobs felt like one of the sessions where we took a leap as group in developing a better bond with the students and were able to give the students a perspective from all of the different mentors.”

- GCI Mentor



As is typical for year-long programs, attendance of mentors and mentees flagged after the holiday break and new year. In future years, we plan to have students develop relationships with most mentors instead of one primary mentor. This will not only ensure that they can learn more from various perspectives, but also that they will have another mentor with whom they have developed a rapport if one of their other mentors has a scheduling conflict. Additionally, we will structure the time together so that each group has more than two mentors in a group so there is always someone available to meet with students.

The budget for materials and other costs prepared ahead of the program was based on estimates. During the course of the pilot, our understanding of the materials and other costs evolved, leading us to reconsider how budgets—specifically for supplies—could be allocated in future program years.

Through the course of the academic year, a strong, transparent partnership between GCI, Fremont High School, and the Ed Fund developed, leading to effective problem-solving and a positive impact on students. Strong partnerships like these are the critical foundation of a successful student program, particularly one that is just beginning. We are deeply grateful for the thoughtfulness, trust, and receptiveness of GCI staff and volunteers.



Thank you!

Looking back at the course of the pilot, we are inspired by the impact made on students and are grateful for GCI's deep investment and trust. We are highly motivated to continue this work in partnership with GCI and in service of Oakland's youth.

